UNITED NATIONS

DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Information Note
International Day of Solidarity
with the Palestinian People

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is observed by the United Nations on 29 November each year in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977 and 34/65 D of 12 December 1979.

Pursuant to those resolutions, the Division for Palestinian Rights organizes, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The date of 29 November was chosen because of its significance to the Palestinian people. On that day in 1947 the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which came to be known as the Partition Resolution. That resolution provided for the establishment of a "Jewish State" and an "Arab State", in Palestine, with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum under a special international régime. Of the two States intended by this resolution, only one, Israel, has come into being.

The Palestinian people, who now number approximately 6 million, are scattered over many countries. About 700,000 live in Israel. Another 2.4 million live in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Of the remainder, many still live in refugee camps and in neighbouring Arab States.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has a twofold objective: to draw the urgent attention of the international community to the continuing plight of the Palestinian people, and to mobilize international public opinion in support of a peaceful settlement of the question in order to enable that people to recover and fully exercise its inalienable rights. These rights have been repeatedly reaffirmed by the General Assembly and include:

1. The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and to compensation for those wishing not to return;

2. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and to national independence and sovereignty, including the right to establish its own State in Palestine.

This year, the observance has particular significance in view of the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-government Arrangements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and the subsequent negotiations for its implementation. The Committee considers that these developments have created significant new opportunities for bringing about the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for advancing towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in

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accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee has called for intensified support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people under its recognized leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in order to ensure the successful implementation of the agreements reached. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has hailed the developments as "an historic achievement which deserves the support of the entire world community", and has offered the assistance of the United Nations "in every possible way".

In response to the call of the United Nations, each year an increasing number of activities are undertaken by Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions and others to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. These activities include the publication of special messages, the organization of meetings, the issue of special postage stamps to commemorate the Day, the dissemination of visual material and the screening of films.

At the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People each year holds a solemn meeting to observe the Day of Solidarity. Solemn meetings are also held at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna and at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

In addition, the United Nations information centres in several countries assist Governments and others in the organization of special activities connected with the Day.

At the solemn meeting held in New York by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, speakers include the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, and the representatives of relevant United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. A message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization is also read at the meeting. NGOs are also invited to attend, and a spokesperson from the international community of NGOs addresses the meeting.

A special Bulletin containing the texts of the statements and messages received on Solidarity Day is published annually by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Other activities organized in connection with the observance of the Day include an exhibition on various aspects of the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee and presented by the Office of the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, and the screening of films throughout the week in which Solidarity Day falls.

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